

Remarks

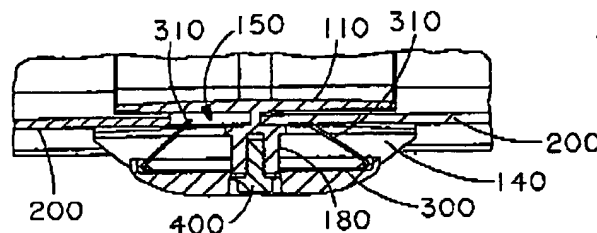
This is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed on June 28, 2005. Claims 25, 26, and 41-43 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested for the following reasons.

Claim 41 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Bernard, U.S. Patent No. 6,450,458. This rejection is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is requested for the following reasons.

Claim 41 recites a method including releasing the first spring portion to release the terminal end of the first trough member without releasing the terminal end of the second trough member.

One embodiment of structure that can perform the method as recited in claim 41 is shown in Figure 7 of the present application, wherein a spring with spring arms 161 and 162 is illustrated. As shown, spring arm 162 is released without releasing spring arm 161. A terminal end of a trough member that was engaged by spring arm 162 is therefore released without releasing a terminal end of a trough member engaged by spring arm 161. Another embodiment is shown in Figure 39, wherein spring arm 562 is released without releasing spring arm 561. A terminal end of a trough member that was engaged by spring arm 562 is therefore released without releasing a terminal end of a trough member engaged by spring arm 561.

Bernard discloses a coupler 100 with a retention clip 300. Bernard, Fig. 1. Clip 300 includes arms 310 and fastener 400 used to attach clip 300 to coupler 100. Bernard, Fig. 4. With retention clip 310 mounted on coupler 100 using fastener 400, arms 310 extend into a duct receiving space 150 to engage duct elements 200, as shown in Figure 5 reprinted below.



Bernard, Fig. 5.

The method for releasing arms 310 of retention clip 300 and duct elements 200 is described as follows:

The duct coupler 100 is still capable of easy removal when desired by simply removing fastener 400, such as by unthreading when the fastener is a threaded bolt. By doing this, the retention 300 and spring are removable from the duct receiving space so that the ducts 200 are freely removable from the coupler 100.

Bernard, col. 4, ll. 24-29. Bernard therefore only discloses releasing both arms 310 of retention clip 300 by removing fastener 400 to release both duct elements 200. Bernard fails to disclose or suggest releasing one arm 310 to release the terminal end of one duct element 200 without releasing the terminal end of the other duct element 200. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 41 are respectfully requested.

Claims 42 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Cory, GB 1,342,085. This rejection is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is requested for the following reasons.

Claim 42 recites a method including releasing a plurality of first locking elements on the coupler in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction to release a plurality of first springs from a locking position to release the terminal end of the first trough member without releasing the terminal end of the second trough member.

Cory discloses a locating member 11 with a spring biased retaining member 12. Locating member 11 is used to join two pieces of channel-section trunking 10 using retaining member 12. Cory, p. 1, ll. 66-72. Cory discloses that the retaining member 12 can include formations such as a raised portion 19 to engage a wall of trunking 10. Cory, Fig. 3; and page 2, ll. 25-31 and 62-69.

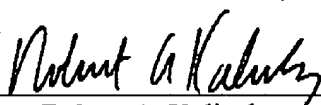
Cory fails to disclose or suggest releasing retaining member 12 or trunking 10 from locating member 11. Cory therefore fails to disclose or suggest releasing a plurality of first locking elements on the coupler in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction to release a plurality of first springs from a locking position to release the terminal end of the first trough member without releasing the terminal end of the second trough member, as recited by claim 42. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 42, as well as claim 43 that depends therefrom, are respectfully requested.

Claims 25 and 26 are allowed. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's assistance in identifying allowable subject matter. All claims are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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